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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Afghanistan, Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kazakstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Morocco, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and United States of America: draft resolution

Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, by which it adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, as well as its resolution 49/192 of 23 December 1994,

Conscious of the need effectively to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, as set out in the Declaration,

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/24 of 3 March 1995 1/ on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic,

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1/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

religious and linguistic minorities, in which the Commission, inter alia, decided to authorize the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish, initially for a three-year period, an inter-sessional working group consisting of five of its members, to meet each year for five working days in order to promote the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/31 of 25 July 1995, in which the Council authorized the establishment of the Working Group,

Noting that the Working Group held its first session from 28 August to 1 September 1995, and that its report will be made available to the Commission on Human Rights,

Aware of the provisions of article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 2/ concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

Acknowledging that the United Nations has an increasingly important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, inter alia, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

Concerned by the growing frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts concerning minorities in many countries, and their often tragic consequences,

Affirming that effective measures and the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, ensuring effective non-discrimination and equality for all, contribute to the prevention and peaceful solution of human rights problems and situations involving minorities,

Considering that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural heritage of society as a whole of the States in which such persons live,

Reaffirming the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the Declaration,

Noting the positive initiatives of many countries as well as regional organizations to protect minorities and promote mutual understanding,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the effective promotion of the Declaration, 3/

2/ Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ A/50/514.

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Urges States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, including through the facilitation of their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development in their country;

3. Urges States to take, as appropriate, all the necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the principles contained in the Declaration;

4. Appeals to States that so wish to consider making bilateral and multilateral arrangements or agreements in order to protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in their countries, in accordance with the Declaration;

5. Recognizes that respect for human rights as well as the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments as well as between and among minorities is central to the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

6. Calls upon the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of disputes to assist in existing or potential situations involving minorities;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, in the implementation of the present resolution, to provide human and financial resources for such advisory services and technical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, within existing resources;

8. Calls upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within his mandate, the implementation of the Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments concerned for that purpose;

9. Urges all treaty bodies and special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to give due regard, within their respective mandates, to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

10. Invites States, interested intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organizations, special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights to continue to submit, as appropriate, contributions as to how they promote and give effect to the Declaration;

11. Invites the Secretary-General to continue the dissemination of information on the Declaration and the promotion of understanding thereof,

including through activities within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;

12. Calls upon States and the Secretary-General to give due regard to the Declaration in their respective training programmes for officials;

13. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate and consult with regional organizations on minority issues;

14. Encourages intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled "Human rights questions".